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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 005177

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SUBJECT: ASO, NUKAGA AGREE WITH AMBASSADOR ON DPRK MISSILE
LAUNCHES 'LESSONS LEARNED'

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Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer, reasons 1.5 (b, d).

11. (S) SUMMARY: In separate meetings with Foreign Minister Aso and Defense Minister Nukaga, Ambassador Schieffer highlighted recommendations on how to further strengthen U.S.-Japan alliance coordination from the September 7 "Capstone Lessons Learned Conference" on the bilateral response to recent North Korean missile launches. Both Ministers welcomed the recommendations from the conference, including the need for concrete improvements in intelligence sharing, bilateral interagency cooperation, military operations, and ballistic missile defense. Aso stressed that the most important 'lesson learned' was the need to break down the bureaucratic 'stove pipes' preventing efficient intelligence sharing within the Japanese government. END SUMMARY.

12. (S) Ambassador Schieffer met separately with Foreign Minister Aso and Defense Minister Nukaga September 7 to review the conclusions of a high-level, inter-agency bilateral conference held earlier that day to assess U.S.-Japan cooperation in response to the North Korean missile launches of July 4/5. The conference (details reported septel) included senior U.S. representatives from State, OSD, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), PACOM, Pacific Fleet, Seventh Fleet, USFJ and component commands. Japanese representatives took part at a similar level from the Cabinet Office, MOFA, the Japan Defense Agency, and all branches of the Japan Self Defense Forces (SDF).

13. (S) U.S.-Japan cooperation in response to North Korea's missile launches had been unprecedented in its intensity and effectiveness, said the Ambassador. It had validated gains made in the ongoing effort to realign and transform the bilateral alliance. The U.S. had proposed the 'lessons learned' conference to build on that success, he said, and to identify what could be done better, especially considering that the next crisis might come with far less warning.

14. (S) In similar presentations to both Ministers, the Ambassador highlighted key conclusions of the conference in four areas: intelligence sharing, bilateral inter-agency cooperation, military operations, and ballistic missile defense.

-- On intelligence sharing, the Ambassador emphasized the need to standardize the system by which classified information is handled within the Japanese government, to allow shared intelligence to flow faster to Japanese policy-makers with greater confidence that it will not be leaked. He stressed that leaks, particularly those compromising sources and methods, benefit our enemies and undermine our ability to collect information on them. A clear example of the damage caused by leaks, he said, was a report last year in an American newspaper on U.S. satellite monitoring of a North Korean possible nuclear test site, which had tipped off Pyongyang to better camouflage its activities.

-- On bilateral inter-agency coordination, the Ambassador noted that, while the tie-up between policy-makers on both sides during the missile crisis had been excellent, arrangements had been ad hoc. It was vital to somehow formalize those arrangements so that both sides identify in

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advance "who will be sitting across the table" in a crisis. Since a future provocation could come suddenly, allowing no time for an ad hoc response, it is vital to set up a bilateral inter-agency group before a crisis occurs.

-- On operational coordination, the Ambassador highlighted the value of Japanese BADGE air defense data, which had been shared (intermittently) with U.S. forces during the crisis. U.S. Aegis ships in "stare mode" monitoring the North Korean missile launches were unable to focus on air defense, he said, and the BADGE data reduced their vulnerability. It would benefit both countries' forces to ensure that such data sharing can be institutionalized.

-- On ballistic missile defense (BMD), the Ambassador noted that, although the missile crisis had occurred when BMD capabilities were in their infancy, it had made clear to the public in both countries that BMD was increasingly important for their security. Both sides needed to clarify their BMD command-and-control arrangements to enable swift, operational decisions in the event of a future launch. With such limited lead time, each side must be certain what the other is prepared to do in response to a launch.

Aso: Japan must improve internal intel-sharing

15. (S) Foreign Minister Taro Aso welcomed the conclusions of the 'lessons learned' conference. The important task now for both sides, he said, was to translate those recommendations into concrete action. He stressed the need for the U.S. and Japan to coordinate their bilateral response in advance against any future North Korean provocation, whether it be more missile launches or a nuclear test. To deter North Korea, it was vital to deepen cooperation in the alliance, and to show the public in both countries that the U.S. and Japan are united in their response.

16. (S) The most important 'lesson learned' for Japan,

stressed Aso, was the need to improve intelligence sharing within the Japanese government. "Stove-piping" was preventing critical intelligence from flowing to policy-makers in a timely fashion, he said, and this needed to change.

¶17. (S) On bilateral inter-agency coordination, Aso agreed that specific personnel should be identified in advance on both sides to speed coordination before the next crisis.

¶18. (S) On BMD, Aso said the launches had caused a "landslide change" in Japanese public concern over North Korea's missiles, especially among those living on the Sea of Japan coast. There was a keen awareness that every one of the seven missiles launched was capable of hitting Japan, he noted. The Japanese government was set to approve added funding for missile defense, with "not a soul" in the political world raising objections. The failure of the Taepodong-2 launch would surely give Pyongyang reason to fire another one, he said.

¶19. (S) A related Japanese priority, Aso added, was to continue coordination with the U.S. on the follow-up to UN Security Council Resolution 1695, passed in the wake of the missile launches. The Japanese government would soon target financial sanctions against "twelve groups and one

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individual" with links to the Pyongyang regime, he said.

Nukaga: Expanding data exchange helps operations

¶10. (S) Defense Minister Fukushima Nukaga praised the results of the 'lessons learned' conference. For JDA, he said, it provided an excellent way to examine the practical steps needed to improve U.S.-Japan cooperation, especially in the operational area, based on response to a "real-world threat."

¶11. (S) On intelligence sharing, Nukaga said that during the missile crisis, JDA had played a central role as a conduit for exchanges with the U.S. Communications had been kept secure, and all equipment and capabilities had functioned well, he said. Within the Japanese government, however, events had highlighted the need to improve the protection of sensitive information, which JDA needed to pass to other agencies (including MOFA and the Prime Minister's Office) to facilitate policy decisions. Depending on the threat, JDA would need to share information with officials in the National Policy Agency (NPA), as well as officials responsible for railways, nuclear power plants and electronic communications. The Japanese government should work "realistically" to better institutionalize the internal intelligence flow to enable swift decision-making, and to clarify which officials would have access to intelligence received from the United States.

¶12. (S) On operational coordination, the conclusions drawn from the missile crisis would be relevant to the ongoing consideration of the roles, missions and capabilities of each branch of Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF). More specifically, it was now clear that information exchange between U.S. and Japanese forces -- via BADGE air defense data and the communications designed to link both countries' Aegis ships -- was valuable to both sides. Information exchange between U.S. and Japanese forces was not an abstract issue, but a real-world, practical concern that must be addressed "so that our operators can talk to each other." More progress was needed in bilateral planning, he added, a process ongoing under the "2 2" agreement.

¶13. (S) On BMD, Nukaga cited Japan's standing requests to accelerate the provision of BMD assets to Japan, and to accelerate the deployment of U.S. BMD assets to the region. He looked forward to working with the U.S. in the follow-up to those requests, he said.

Ambassador press comments

¶14. (SBU) In brief comments to reporters after the meetings at MOFA and JDA, the Ambassador said he had held discussions on the close U.S.-Japan cooperation that took place in response to the recent missile crisis. Noting that it would not be helpful to go into details, it was clear that increasing cooperation in the alliance would bring benefits to the public of both countries. He added that the U.S. regards its alliance with Japan as the cornerstone of security in the region.

SCHIEFFER